



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Environmental Restoration of Topanga Creek

### *Significant Improvements for Endangered Steelhead Trout*

The California Department of Parks and Recreation announced today that it will start work August 11, 2008 on the restoration of the natural stream channel for Topanga Creek. The project will remove the large earthen berm that deflects the flow of Topanga Creek around the Rodeo Grounds in lower Topanga Canyon.

The removal of the berm was identified as a priority restoration project after the property became part of Topanga State Park in 2001 because of the impact it has had on the hydrology of Topanga Creek. Removal of the berm will restore the natural creek channel and the surrounding 12-acre floodplain, and will allow accumulated sediments to be carried out naturally by storms. This change should restore the surface flow to over 3,000 feet of creek that currently flows underground.

The additional creek habitat is critical for the support of the federally endangered southern steelhead trout. Topanga Creek is currently one of only two creeks left in the Santa Monica Bay that support a reproducing population of these fish. The berm was identified by the *Santa Monica Bay Steelhead Habitat Assessment Final Project Report* (CalTrout 2006) as a barrier impeding steelhead passage.

The berm, located 300 yards north of the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Topanga Canyon Boulevard, consists of approximately 26,000 tons of imported fill material that was installed incrementally, without permit approval, following the 1969 and 1980 floods to protect former rental homes in the floodplain. The berm removal will conclude by October 9, 2008.

Two flagmen will be stationed on Topanga Canyon Boulevard at Rodeo Grounds Road to direct trucks into and out of the work site between the hours of 9 AM and 3 PM at the rate of one truck per traffic signal cycle. The trucks will be staged along the shoulders of Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Trucks carrying asphalt that is potentially contaminated with lead will travel east on Pacific Coast Highway to the Santa Monica Freeway and on to a landfill in the San Joaquin Valley. Trucks carrying uncontaminated fill will travel north on Topanga Canyon Boulevard to the Calabasas Landfill. (more)

The project will comply with all state and federal requirements for handling lead contaminated materials, as well as environmental permits that are designed to protect the creek and wildlife during the excavation process. Compliance measures include dust control, biological and archaeological monitoring, bird nesting surveys and re-vegetation of the site with native riparian vegetation.

Funding for this project, to cover berm removal, re-vegetation and monitoring, is being provided by grants from a number of organizations, as follows:

California Wildlife Conservation Board: \$1,591,300  
State Coastal Conservancy/Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission: \$500,000  
L. A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky: \$450,000  
California Department of Fish and Game: \$240,047.50  
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority: \$90,000  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: \$50,000  
In-kind funds are being contributed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Topanga Creek Stream Team and volunteers from the local community.

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